(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) to (c) There is no report of shortage of vegetables in any part of Maharashtra. However, for modernisation of vegetable production Government of India is implementing Centrally Sponsored scheme on Integrated development of vegetables including root and tuber crops. The Scheme envisages production of quality planting material of vegetables including onion and potato, seed village concept, transfer of advance technology through laying out frontline demonstration plots at farmers fields and training to the farmers, on-farm post harvest handling etc., under which assistance may be availed by Government of Maharashtra.

Illegal prawn fishing

1248. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether illegal prawn fishing in Orissa's coastal Kendrapara district threatens existing mangrove forests; and

(b) if so, the action taken or proposed to demolish such "gherries" to protect ecological balance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A special campaign has been launched by the State Revenue and Forests Departments for demolition of prawn "gherries" which were unauthorisedly constructed for prawn fishing. The State Government has reported that so far, 728 acres of gherries have been demolished.

National Policy for Drought Proofing

1249. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to formulate comprehensive action plan for eradication/mitigation of drought in the areas of rainfall of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of evaluation of programme designed for drought proofing in all these years; and

(d) special features of New National Policy on Drought Proofing?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) *There is no proposal as* such under consideration.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Drought Prone Area Programme is in operation in 164 districts of 13 States. The basic objective is to minimise the adverse effects of drought and to promote economic development. National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas is being implemented in 25 States and 2 Union Territories. The approach and strategy of the project is moisture conservation and diversification of farming system for better productivity. Water Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas in North-Eastern States is also being implemented. As a result of the programme, the productivity in these areas has gone up.

The Ministry is not aware as such of any new policy on drought proofing.

Varieties of Wheat

†1250. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Scientists are carrying out a research on varieties of wheat giving more yield so that more yield can be obtained in comparison to the best varieties of wheat;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when these varieties would be provided to the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Intensive research efforts are under way to develop superior high yielding wheat cultivars. The Major emphasis is on the development of superior genotypes with improved yield potential, resistance to diseases and other desirable traits.

Research is also going on the development of hybrid wheat and application of biotechnology in wheat improvement.

(c) Development of high yielding varieties of wheat is a continuous

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.